THE GOODNESS OF GOD

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THE problem to which the present paper is addressed is one aspect of that of the relationship between Religion and Morality. That God is good is a proposition which presents itself to many with axiomatic force, and by its help the path is traced which leads directly either from Religion to Morality or from Morality to Religion. Yet the reflective mind may well ask: By what evidence, or in what way, do we know that God is good? If the proposition rests on evidence in the ordinary sense, what is it and wherein lies its convincing character? Or if it rests, as is often asserted, on another sort of knowledge altogether, what is this non-experiential cognition and what are its guarantees? Or again, we may ask whether the proposition is analytic, *i.e.* such that the predicate good is only a specific mentioning of a quality already known to be comprised within the idea of God; or whether it is synthetic, adding to the known character of God an attribute new and hitherto unknown?

To ask these questions, particularly the latter, seems strange to the English mind, and that owing to an accident of language. The words "God" and "good" (and so "Gott" and "gut") happen to bear a certain superficial resemblance to one another, a resemblance which, in spite of the philologists, strikes the mind as well as the eye. Hence in English and allied tongues we seem to have the support of etymology for the far-reaching theological formula. Its truth remains unquestioned because recognized (apparently) in the fundamental facts of language. It seems to be a self-identical proposition. But this resemblance does not occur in other branches of human speech. That "Dieu" is "bon" does not sound so obvious a truism as that "God" is "good"; and when the epithet "theios" (divine) was applied to the gallants of Athens, we may suspect no suggestion of morality. Indeed, to judge from the languages of mankind, the goodness of God would appear to be by no means implicit in his divinity, and it would seem that the ascription of the one to the other represents a definite stage in religious evolution.

The problem therefore remains: how do we know that God is good? Earlier enquiry would have approached the question from one of two ways. It would either have started out from the consideration of the idea of God (however attained), and sought to

determine the place within it of the attribute of goodness; or it would have started from the consideration of the idea of goodness and sought to determine the place it allows, or demands, for the idea of God. Recent developments in psychology have suggested a third way of approach, and that not through 'abstract' or 'transcendental' conceptions at all. It would analyse concrete human experience and show that within it are as a fact comprised, either separately or in conjunction, both God and goodness. This method has on the face of it advantages which appeal strongly to the modern mind. It is impersonal, unbiassed. It rests on 'facts,' not 'ideas.' It draws its material wherever material is to be found. The whole range of experience, from aboriginal and primitive peoples to the highest mystical personalities of all creeds and none, has been ransacked under its direction. From the vast body of information so accumulated certain conclusions have been arrived at, conclusions from which an answer to our question may be expected. I propose in the first part of this paper to follow them out, drawing mainly on Professor Otto's now classic treatise *Das Heilige* in Mr. Harvey's translation *The Idea of the Holy*.[1]

I

The religious experience, we learn, is a fact. It is not necessarily universal—some of us are 'blind' to colour or to musical harmony—but it is an element in the make-up of at least some human beings. When analysed it falls into two parts, the rational and the non-rational. The rational is the moralizing, the non-rational the awesome, or, in the technical phrase, the 'numinous.' In these two parts we recognize at once the two terms of the proposition which we have under discussion, 'goodness' and 'God.' We may take them separately, the latter first.

The 'numinous' is apprehended as an objective factor in the universe, external to us and presented to us. It brings us to our knees, compels our worship. We do not first know it and then worship it. We worship, and, in the worshipping, apprehend. But our apprehension is not through the reason. We do not know it as an object through categories. We do not really 'know' it at all. We can only say of it that "its nature is such that it grips or stirs the human mind with this and that determinate affective state."[2] All we can do is "to attempt to give a further indication of these determinate states"[3]; we cannot further determine *it*. *Our* reactions to *it* may be studied. *It* remains incomprehensible. The

[1] Milford, fourth impression, 1926. [2] *Idea of the Holy*, p. 12. [3] *Loc. cit.*

numinous is thus not an object of knowledge perceived through the senses, nor is it the "therefore of every wherefore" [1] apprehended by mind. But it is not for that reason "merely a thought within us." [1] The numinous is a fact, however little cognizable through reason. It is a real element within a real universe, an element not seen or thought, but 'divined.'

Much light on this position is thrown by anthropological research. Dr. R. R. Marett, in a volume published some years before *Das Heilige* (1917) and containing essays going back to 1900, declared that "awe will in the case of religion have to be treated as a far more constant factor in religion than any particular conception of the aweful." [2] "Energy" is "perceived," and is recognized "in the first instance" as "mysterious." It is not "mysterious because it is so potent." [3] It is potent because it is mysterious. We *start with* "the awareness of a fundamental aspect of life and of the world, which aspect may provisionally be termed the supernatural." [4] This is no arbitrary assumption. Nor is it even an interpretation of relatively advanced stages of experience. It is arrived at by an "inductive study of the ideas and customs of savagery." [5] It is indeed illuminating to compare Dr. Marett's chapter on the *Conception of Mana* with Professor Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. Both are forced to seek strange words to express their thought. What the one calls the numinous is with the other the *oudah*, *wakan* or *mana* of the Polynesian lexicographers. *Mana*, like the numinous, is a "force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil." [6] It is "supernatural power; divine authority; having qualities which ordinary persons or things do not possess." [7] Its neighbour and fellow, the Siouan *wakan*, "may be translated into 'mystery' perhaps more satisfactorily than in any other single English word, yet this rendering is at the same time too limited, as *wakanda* vaguely denotes also power, sacred, grandeur, animate, immortal." [8] It is easy to recognize in these vague aboriginal fumblings, hesitatingly interpreted by Western anthropologists, that sense of the *mysterium tremendum*, with its elements of awefulness, overpoweringness, energy, otherness and fascination, which Otto has traced out so delicately in the most developed religious experience.

So much, for the moment, for the first of the two terms of our proposition. The numinous is a fact—we should perhaps avoid the term God in this connexion at present—and a fact somehow

[1] The phrases are Kant's.
[2] *Threshold of Religion*, London, 1909, Pref., p. xi. [3] *Ibid.*, p. xvi.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 124. [5] *Loc. cit.* [6] *Op. cit.*, p. 120, from Codrington.
[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 121, from Tregear. [8] *Op. cit.*, p. 125, from M'Gee.

sensed or divined. Our second term, goodness or good, presents another sort of difficulty. Goodness is a value. If the numinous were removed from the universe, the universe would be *quantitatively* changed. It is not so with goodness. Goodness is a way in which facts are ordered, set into a *qualitative* scale. The facts remain as they were, and remain as facts. Goodness changes not the fact but our reactions to them. It is, to facts, an external relation.

Does 'goodness' arise out of 'fact'? According to Otto, such a derivation for it would be impossible. The world of value is distinct from the world of fact. Hence it could not have arisen out of the world of fact. But the 'feeling for' goodness is also a fact. We do, as a fact, judge in a certain way. We do, as a fact, react to facts on certain lines. The relation, therefore, however external to the facts, as a fact exists. As a part of our experience (and it will be remembered that the novelty of the method of enquiry lies precisely in its examination and analysis of experience) the judgment of goodness is a fact quite as much as the facts about which the judgment is made. But we have seen that it is not derived from those facts. It would follow necessarily that it is an original and distinct intuition.

This position with regard to our judgments of value, particularly in the sphere of ethics, is not novel, and I do not propose to re-discuss its merits. I am only concerned to point out that the appeal to experience has led to the same result in regard to both terms of our enquiry. We find, within our experience, a feeling for the numinous; and we find, also within our experience, a feeling for the good. The feeling is held to guarantee its object in both cases alike. The numinous exists. Goodness exists.

The numinous exists and goodness exists, each guaranteed by its separate experience. But our problem remains. We have found the two terms of our enquiry, found them firmly set within 'experience.' But, so far at least, they are entirely distinct, independent of one another, two completely separate and discrete terms. We cannot speak of a "necessary connexion" between them, because they are as yet not even "conjoined." We have no knowledge of the numinosity of the good, none of the goodness of the numinous. Religion does not part company with Morality. They have never been together. The numinous *may be* good, the good numinous; *may* be, but not necessarily *is*. Evidence is lacking, and we are at a standstill.

We are now at the supreme point of our enquiry, and at the supreme point of the problem of religion. The 'non-rational' element of religion, as Professor Otto specifically recognizes, although the more significant, is not the more valuable. Religion as we know

it *is* the moralization of the numinous. Without moralization the numinous remains a primitive *mana* or *wakan*. Hence the interest in Otto's solution of the problem, which is simplicity itself.

It will be remembered that we start with a religious experience within which the numinous is divined. We continue with a moral experience within which we have an intuition of goodness. We are now offered a third intuition,[1] the intuition that the numinous is good. Thus the 'holy' in its full sense is engendered, and religion, ethical religion, comes into being.

Now the question before us is by no means that of the fact of these 'experiences' and 'intuitions,' nor, for that matter, of their validity. The personal experience has absolute validity for him who has had it. It is ultimate, in the final sense convincing. Hence it cannot be questioned by one who has not had it. As we so often are told, there are some people so unfortunate as to be blind to colour, some to the harmony of musical sounds, some to the rhythms of great poetry. In the same way, we are assured, some are 'blind' to religion. We cannot argue with them. We can only pity them. This may be true. Yet for all that even the blind man is capable of estimating the connexion between the particular experiences of which he is deprived and the universal conclusions erected on them. He *is* justified in asking, not whether the experiences are facts, but whether, these being granted, the consequence follows. Are we as a matter of fact brought to developed religion on the premises advanced by Professor Otto? Do these three intuitions, the intuition of the numinous, the intuition of the good, and the intuition of the goodness of the numinous, account for the words set at the head of this paper, the Goodness of God? Do they adequately guarantee the proposition under consideration, the proposition that 'God is good'? I submit that they do not, and that for two reasons. The first is that the numinous is not God, the second that the experience of good has nothing to do with God.

That the numinous is not God, in the ordinary sense of the word, is clear from a simple consideration. God, in the ordinary sense of the word, is not a quality. He is substance. Moreover, he is unique, one. The numinous is essentially a quality, and a quality predicable of (that is, found as a fact in) many different subjects. We hear much of the 'eeriness' of places: "*it* is not quite right here," "*it* is uncanny."[2] Is this 'it' God? Is it not rather a far-flung quality of mysteriousness? Let us consider a verse of Genesis declared to be "very instructive for the psychology of religion." "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of Elohim." Otto comments: "The first sentence

[1] *Idea of the Holy*, chap. xvii, p. 140 f. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

gives plainly the mental impression itself in all its immediacy, before reflection has permeated it, and before the meaning-content of the feeling itself has become clear or explicit. It connotes solely the *primal numinous awe*, which has been undoubtedly sufficient in itself in many cases to mark out 'holy' and 'sacred' places, and make of them spots of aweful veneration. . . . There is no need, that is, for the experient to pass on to resolve his mere impression of the eerie and aweful into the idea of a 'numen,' a divine power, dwelling in the aweful place, still less need the *numen* become a *nomen*, a named power, or the 'nomen' become something more than a mere pronoun. Worship is possible without this further explicative process. But Jacob's second statement gives this process of explication and interpretation; it is no longer simply an expression of the actual experience." [1] The point surely is clear, and made by Otto himself. God comes into being only when he is differentiated from his house. Worship (in this sense) must be distinguished from religion. Worship may be primary, and in worship we may divine an object. But that object, however much numinous, is not merely the numinous. It is possible that the 'nomen' comes from the 'numen,' itself derived from the numinous, but it is the 'nomen,' the noun, the substance, not the adjective, the quality, the attribute, which is God. God is not 'experienced' at all. He is inferred.

The truth is that God in the ordinary sense of the word (and I am not saying that the ordinary sense is necessarily sound) cannot, and by the very facts of the case, be found by any investigation of our 'experience.' The psychologist is authorized to deal only with the 'affective states' of the worshipper. He can say nothing about the object of worship. His data are the numinous feelings of humanity, not their object (if it exists), God. Mr. Alexander's usage is alone justifiable. The prescience we have is not of God, but of the quality of deity.

The second reason for dissatisfaction with Professor Otto's position is that the intuition of the good has nothing to do with God. That our sense of moral values is unique and underived is familiar doctrine enough, and, as we said, it is not to our purpose to re-discuss it. But we are justified in enquiring whether, even if admitted, it has anything to do with our problem. In other words, assuming the position to be valid, exactly what does it lead us to infer?

When I make a moral judgment—that "it is wicked to tell a lie," that "pain ought not to be increased unnecessarily," that "murder is evil"—the judgment, so the theory asserts, springs erect and immutable from some unique power within me. I have

[1] *Idea of the Holy*, p. 131.

an intuitive experience of good. I recognize it when I see it. I make moral judgments naturally and immediately, and, judging, know that I judge as I should. Not only do I *act as* a moral being, but I *am* a moral being; and not only *am* I a moral being, but I *know* that I am. *I* know that *I* am. But what of God? So far at least, in the 'moral consciousness,' there is no mention of God at all. Any intuitions we have are of values external to things, and in the experience we become conscious of goodness. But the goodness of which we are conscious is not that of God. It is of ourselves. It may of course be argued that the facts of the moral judgment *imply* the existence of God. That is as may be; but this very position serves only to emphasize the point with which we are concerned at the moment, namely, that, in our moral judgments, God is not 'given' *immediately*.

Professor Otto recognizes this fact quite clearly, and it is because of it, we may well suppose, that he introduces the third intuition, the intuition that God is good. This third intuition is by no means, as some might think, otiose in the system. The traditional way of attacking our problem would have been to start from the idea of God, and to show that the idea of God necessarily includes within itself the idea of goodness. But Professor Otto does not start with a theoretical conception of God's 'necessary nature,' and what he does start with, the numinous divined in religious awe, is clearly not necessarily *good*. The Kantian, standing on the fact of the *a priori* character of morality, could, with less prudence than his master, argue to the necessary *existence of God*; but the God so found is poles removed from Otto's 'mysterium tremendum,' or the Polynesian *mana* or *wakanda*. No. Professor Otto is right. Logically, a fresh intuition is needed, or God and goodness fall irrevocably asunder.

And so in fact they do, and that in spite of a third or any other intuition, unless we are willing to cover all our ignorance with that mysterious and seductive word. It must be remembered that we are starting out from *experience* and analysing the content of *experience*. Now we are prepared, for the sake of the argument, to accept the human personal experience of the numinous as proof that the numinous exists. We are prepared, for the sake of the argument, to accept the human personal experience of the good in proof that good exists. But we have no right to speak of the morality or goodness of *God* unless, on the same showing, we have direct personal experience of it, that is, to put it crudely, unless it were, like the other two factors, found as a component element within our "affective states." But that would only be possible if we were ourselves God, because, *in this sense of 'experience,'* it is only the subject, *i.e.* God himself, who can have the necessary direct

experience of his own goodness.[1] The psychological enquirer cannot have it both ways. If we are to accept personal experiences on their own merits and at their own valuations, we accept them, although perforce. But we must set a limit to our acceptances. We accept the numinous, we accept the good. They are both given to us in our personal human experience. But the connexion between them, the goodness of the numinous, we can accept, by precisely the same token, only on the evidence of that experience within which it is given, the divine experience itself.

This suggestion, far from being preposterous, is as a matter of history the conventional answer given to our question. God is commonly represented as having communicated to men certain facts with regard to his own nature. These facts are drawn from his own self-knowledge. They are facts of his own experiences of himself.

Now I am by no means affirming (or denying) that the idea of revelation is essential to a philosophy of religion. I am concerned only to point out that the theory of Professor Otto, and indeed of all those who sponsor similar accounts, breaks down precisely on the point of its own novelty. The 'psychological' approach to religion has been offered as a substitute for the older methods. In particular, it has been generally held to present an alternative to the so-called dogma of an 'external' revelation. But we now find that it is itself bound either to call in the idea of revelation or to confess its bankruptcy. Its numinous is not God. Its goodness is merely human. And the goodness of God, unless the subject of a special revelation from God himself, remains a mystery, unresolved and unresolvable.

II

Thus the novel approach to religious questions proposed by the psychological theologian fails to provide an answer to our problem. Indeed, it tends to accentuate that problem. It insists that religion is a special activity, an activity of worship which has nothing to do with morality; and in its necessary emphasis on the affective states of the worshipper it is shut out from the object of worship. All kindred theories suffer from the same disability. It may be true, as one understands now from Mr. Whitehead, that the only contact which religion has with action is in ritual, and that ritual itself is preceded by emotion just as it itself precedes belief. Yet all these

[1] That is, of course, as an '*a priori* category.' For the *a posteriori* argument, disavowed, or rather (on their own showing) transcended, by theories of 'experience,' see below.

three primary factors are, as experience has shown only too clearly, far from being necessarily moral. At what stage then, we may well ask, does the moral enter? "Whence comes this most surprising of all the facts in the history of religion, that beings, obviously born originally of horror and terror, become *gods*—beings to whom men pray, to whom they confide their sorrow or their happiness, in whom they behold the origin and the sanction of morality, law, and the whole canon of justice?" [1]

I propose in what follows to offer a theory as to the point in religious evolution at which this moralization takes place, the point, that is, at which worship passes into religion. I shall try to show that there is a specific process of rationalization, and that the rationalization produces morality. But I shall insist that the process is not immediate at all, certainly not *a priori* or intuitive. It is highly mediated. A vast complex of new factors becomes introduced. Morality *is* a product of rationalization, but of a rationalization which goes far beyond the merely moral. The rationalization is, in fact, ratiocinative, and, in the widest sense, philosophical.

According to a well-known theory of ethics morality is the point of view of the 'impartial spectator.' You and I may quarrel, and our passions seize on our intellects; neither of us can conceive of our several selves as being wrong. Only a third person with no interest on either side can judge with whom is the right. In the same way, if, when you and I quarrel, we retain hold of our intellects instead of allowing them to be overwhelmed, then our own intellects stand in the place of disinterested other persons, and can look dispassionately on what is taking place and deliver judgment. The voice of conscience is, in fact, the opinion of an impartial third party. It is a 'wider' view become articulate.

This theory has been subjected to much criticism, and in any case it leaves the 'sentiment of approbation' itself unexplained. Yet it would be generally agreed that it brings out emphatically one important character of the moral. The moral is essentially disinterested. It only comes into being when partiality is laid aside. The moral point of view is that which holds good for all of us. But that means that ideally it is not a point of view at all. It is a centre of vantage or appreciation from which all particular points of view disappear. It is beyond you and me; beyond our families and local loyalties; beyond our tribes and countries and continents and worlds; beyond, one is tempted to say with Plato, Being itself. It is God. God alone is a fair and impartial spectator. He sees all and takes no sides.

This position is not offered as an argument for the *existence* of

[1] *Idea of the Holy*, pp. 140–1.

God. It is intended to show the connexion between God and goodness. God is *not* good in the sense in which we are good. Goodness is predicated of God *sensu eminentiori*, as some of the Schoolmen deliberately held, *i.e. in a different sense* from that in which it is predicated of man. Hence no argument from *our* 'experience' of goodness has any relevance to *his*. He is good because, and in so far as, he is impartial; he is not impartial because he is good. It is the impartiality which is primary, not the goodness. Goodness is *not* an attribute of divinity in the sense of being a simple, underived, indefinable, essential quality. If it is to be called an attribute at all, it must be recognized as a *secondary* one, and as used in a secondary and derived sense. The fundamental question therefore becomes, not how we know that God is good, but how we know that God is impartial. But impartiality is of the essence of God. We may therefore ask, how does god (or 'the gods') become God? How does the numinous, to return to Professor Otto's phraseology, become a 'numen,' and the 'numen' a 'nomen'? What is the passage from the vaguely awesome to the "Universal Father," from the "place full of dread" to "Him who inhabits eternity"?

Cosmology is in these days out of date. Nothing, we are now told, was ever made. Things simply 'grew.' But this fashion of thought seems characteristic of advanced speculation, and more primitive times and peoples know nothing of it. To judge from comparative mythology, few things fascinated the early mind more than the problem of origins, and gross though many of the stories may be, the interest that produced them is evident. The gods are *creators*, often, indeed, themselves created, *naturæ naturantes* and *naturæ naturatæ* at one. Gods are not only spirits, vague mysterious beings. They produced the world in which we live and they made it what it is.

It is in this creative aspect of God that we must seek for the key to our problem. It is not that creative gods as such are necessarily moral—the whole dictionary of mythology is a monument of protest against any such view. No special moral significance attaches to the fact that 'things' are brought into being by 'spirit.' If each separate thing is produced or suffused by a different spirit, all we have is a chaos, both for logic and for ethics. The world is one vast muddle. There are kindly and unkindly spirits, to be won over or set against one another. Their favour is propitiated, their will influenced, by entirely non-rational considerations. At this stage there is no goodness, no morality. It is only when reflection on the creational aspect of divinity reveals the necessity of its unity that creationism achieves moral significance. When one God creates both heaven and earth and stands above and apart from the whole, then the impartial spectator of the moralists emerges.

Cosmogony gives place to cosmology, and it is within cosmology that developed religion is born. Religion is, in fact, concerned largely with the intellectual problem of origins. The 'divine *father*' is primarily the *maker* of all.

Religion, then, comprises, as an essential element, what has been stigmatized as 'bad science.' 'Bad science' it well may be. We hear so much nowadays about the "irrational" element in nature that we may well wonder whether the religionists were right in referring everything which is to one rational principle. This question, however, is not to our present problem. We are asking how the numinous becomes God, the supremely impartial arbiter demanded by the conception of morality, and we answer that the numinous can only become God when brought within the rationalizing sphere of cosmology. It is the one and unique God of creation, and that God alone, who may be said, although mediately and in a peculiar, 'eminent' sense, to be good; and it is the conception of this one and unique God of creation which, in virtue of this very unity and uniqueness, creates morality. The "impartial spectator" of the moralists, or, what is much the same, the "view of the whole of the philosophers," is an abstract conception. It becomes vital only when embodied in the centre of activity on which the world depends.

It is a saying of Goethe that in science we are pantheists, in art polytheists, in morality monotheists. In the monotheism which is morality there is no abating of the numinous force of religion, only a filling out of its fundamental characteristics. The God of creation who is the God of morality is still 'awesome,' still 'overpowering,' still 'urgent,' still 'wholly other' and 'fascinating.' He is *qadosh*, transcendent power. Yet the power is not *in vacuo*, a matter of mere feeling or faith, it is the power of God which produced the world; and it is in God's transcendence of the world which he so produced that the secret of his justice is contained. Other strands of reflection may detect goodness *in* the work of his hands. Primarily he is good only in so far as he is separate and distinct *from* that work. His goodness is not a necessary part of his divinity. His divinity is creative. His creativeness is unitary. His unitariness forms the ideal of impartiality. And in his impartiality he is 'good,' that is, fair and equal to all.

III

Our problem and its solution lie entirely within the realm of theology. It may be that for metaphysics neither of the terms involved in the argument have ultimate significance. It may be that their conjunction, for metaphysics, has no meaning at all.

These are points which lie outside the scope of our discussion. What I have suggested is that, within the realm of the ideas in question, the moral character of God, in so far as it has any meaning, is a logical derivative of his transcendence. The proposition that God is good is thus both synthetic and *a posteriori*, and depends upon a series of reflections which are themselves of the the same character.

In the light of this conception, which may be shown to have a historical as well as a logical basis, many old problems find an easier solution. I do not propose to enter on them here. I am concerned rather to stress the one point of importance which emerges for the *general* attitude to be adopted towards religion. Developed religion is highly intellectualized, and it is in its intellectual elements that its development lies and by its intellectual elements that its value is to be estimated. It is a contribution to *thought*. It is, to use a much maligned word, a system, an "*intellectual* system of the universe."

The characteristic of this system in its purest form is its fusion between the two great interests of humankind, the theoretical and the practical. These are brought together within the one central conception of God. The God of theoretical science is not distinct and apart from the God of practical morality. It is precisely the unitary principle of things, that factor which makes the world one for knowledge, which is at the same time the central principle for norms of conduct. I am not arguing here for the objective existence of that principle—that is as may be; so much however at least may be granted to our discussion that the conception is not a mystery or to be defended by the jugglery of half-lights. We are too anxious to turn our backs on logic. Yet the irrational to which we retreat is neither convincing nor permanent. We should do better to fix our faith not on the mysterious and incomprehensible, but on that small portion of things which, relatively, we do understand. It does not follow, as Pascal remarked, that things do *not* exist because we do not understand them. But it follows none the more that because we do not understand them therefore they do as a fact exist.

The contention of the foregoing is that while there is an intimate connexion between the idea of God and the idea of goodness, this connexion is no more based on obscure *a priori* intuitions than are the ideas themselves. The idea of God is a rational construction; the idea of goodness is a rational construction; and the goodness of God too is a rational conception arrived at through the portal of discursive thought. God, as we saw earlier, is not experienced but inferred, and the same, naturally and inevitably, is true of his attributes.

All this merely repeats, with regard to one particular department of thought, the old philosophic lesson that knowledge is always mediated. 'Experience' or experiences are only raw material. Leibniz wrote long ago of Descartes' argument for the existence of God from the idea we have of him: "It is not enough to appeal to personal experience, for this is to break off, not to carry through, demonstration, unless one can show a way through which others also can arrive at an experience of the same kind." Yet even if that way be found, the experiential method itself warns us against accepting the result without criticism. "It is one thing to say that the world is such that men approach certain objects with awe, worship, piety, sacrifice and prayer, and that this is a fact which a theory of existence must reckon with as truly as with the facts of science. But it is a different thing to say that religious experience gives *evidence* of the reality of its *own* objects, or that the consciousness of an obligation proves the validity of its special object, or the general fact of duty carries within itself any deliverance as to its source in reality . . . We must conceive the world in terms which make it possible for devotion, piety, love, beauty, and mystery to be as real as anything else. *But whether the loved and devotional objects have all the qualities which the lover and the devout worshipper attributes to them is a matter to be settled by evidence, and evidence is always extrinsic.*" [1]

[1] Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (1925), pp. 17, 18. (Italics of the last sentence mine.)